

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 03121 280116Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 L-03 SP-02 INR-07 EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3694

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 03121

STADIS//////////

FOR HURWITZ (EA/ANP) FROM AMBASSADOR SELDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, OCLR, NZ

SUBJECT: SEALING OF MEAT LOCKERS

REF: A) WELLINGTON 2312, B) WELLINGTON 2313

1. FROM TELEPHONE CALL TO THE EMBASSY FROM THE DESK, WE WERE INFORMED THAT THERE IS PRESENTLY AT THE DEPARTMENT A DRAFT MESSAGE RESPONDING TO THE GNZ'S PROPOSED PROCEDURES FOR SOLVING THE SO-CALLED MEAT LOCKER INSPECTION PROBLEM ABOARD VISITING U.S. NAVY SHIPS (SEE REFTELS). WE WERE FURTHER INFORMED THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT IS SEEKING TO DRAW A TIGHT LINKAGE BETWEEN THE TREATMENT OF U.S. NAVY AND COAST GUARD SHIPS.

2. AT MY REQUEST, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PACIFIC, ADMIRAL WEISNER, WHO IS CURRENTLY IN WELLINGTON IN CONNECTION WITH ANZUS COUNCIL MEETING, DISCUSSED MEAT LOCKER ISSUE WITH VICE ADMIRAL MOORER. I AM ADVISED BY ADMIRAL WEISNER THAT OPNAV IS WILLING TO SIGN
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OFF ON MESSAGE WHICH WOULD NOT RPT. NOT LINK THE NAVY AND COAST GUARD. I STRONGLY URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT AGREE TO THAT COURSE OF ACTION AND MAKE NO REFERENCE WHATSOEVER IN ITS REPLY TO THE PARAGRAPH OF THE GNZ AIDE-MEMOIRE CONCERNING COAST GUARD VESSELS. THE ONLY PROBLEM, AND INDEED THE GENESIS OF THIS ENTIRE EXERCISE, HAS BEEN THE INABILITY OF VISITING U.S. NAVY WARSHIPS

TO SUBMIT TO ANY TYPE OF PORT INSPECTION. IN TWENTY YEARS THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SIMILAR EXPRESSED CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO COAST GUARD VESSELS. IN MY OPINION, NOW IS THE OPPORTUNE TIME FOR THIS IMMEDIATE, I.E., NAVY PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED, AND WE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THE GNZ JUNE 16 AIDE-MEMOIRE PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR SUCH A SOLUTION. I FIRMLY BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT TO INSIST UPON LINKAGE BETWEEN TREATMENT OF NAVY AND COAST GUARD SHIPS AT THIS STAGE RUNS THE VERY REAL RISK OF SCUTTling THE PROGRESS TO DATE AND PERHAPS EVEN THE LONGER-TERM CHANCES OF FINALLY REACHING AN AGREEMENT. FAILURE TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE NOW WILL COMPLICATE THE SCHEDULING OF SHIP VISITS AND FURTHER DELAY ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOAL TO MAKE THESE VISITS "ROUTINE." MY MISSION HAS WORKED ON THIS PROBLEM FOR MORE THAN A YEAR; THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAVE MOVED THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ABOUT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE; THE GNZ IS EXTREMELY CONCERNED FOR THE PRECEDENT WHICH THIS SPECIAL AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. NAVY MIGHT SET FOR ITS ABILITY TO CONTROL PORT CALLS AND INSPECTIONS OF OTHER NATIONS' SHIPPING. IN SHORT, I BELIEVE WE WOULD ERR SERIOUSLY IF WE WERE TO ENDEAVOR TO PUSH STILL HARDER AT THIS TIME.

4. I AM FULLY AWARE THAT THE PROCEDURE PROPOSED BY THE GNZ WOULD AMOUNT TO ACQUIESCENCE ON OUR PART TO A
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DIFFERENT PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING OF NAVY AND COAST GUARD VESSELS VISITING NEW ZEALAND PORTS. I RECOGNIZE THAT IN SOME CASES IT MAY EVEN RESULT IN DIFFERENT HANDLING OF THE SAME COAST GUARD VESSEL WHICH MAKES TWO SEPARATE CALLS AT NEW ZEALAND PORTS -- ONE IN A DEEPFREEZE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT AND THE OTHER FOR VISITS OF A "COURTESY OR OTHER NON-OPERATIONAL" NATURE. WE MUST KEEP IN MIND, HOWEVER, THAT WHATEVER ACQUIESCENCE THERE MAY BE IS NOT OF RECENT VINTAGE. THE PRECEDENT OF ACCEPTING EXISTING PORT INSPECTION PROCEDURES FOR COAST GUARD VESSELS VISITING NEW ZEALAND PORTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEEPFREEZE OPERATIONS IS NEARLY TWENTY YEARS OLD. IN THIS SPECIAL INSTANCE I AM CONVINCED THAT THERE IS FULL MERIT IN ALLOWING "SLEEPING DOGS LIE." SELDEN

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